

Western Regional Snapshot of the Early Care and Education Landscape (Pre-COVID-19)



Background Indicators

The overall health and well-being of Wisconsin impacts the needs of children and families and the providers caring for them.

Disparities (racial/ethnic, geographic, socioeconomic) exist across all measures

Health	Employment	Education	Poverty
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % Uninsured: 8%• % Uninsured ranges from 5% in St Croix and Pierce Co to 16% in Clark Co• % Vaccination: 66%• % Vaccination ranges from 45% in Clark Co to 78% in LaCrosse• In 2016, there were 7 documented hate crimes in the WR, accounting for 18% of all hate crimes that year.• Burnett County had the second highest rate of child abuse in WI (22 per 1000 compared to 4 per 1000 statewide).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % Unemployment: 3.3%• % Unemployment ranges from 2.6% in Eau Claire Co to 5% in Burnett Co• Median Household Income: \$57,980• Median Household Income ranges from \$48,448 in Rusk Co to \$82,575 in St Croix Co	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4th Grade Reading Proficiency, % Proficient: 46%• Reading Proficiency ranges from 34% in Burnett County to 59% in St Croix.• High School Completion: 92%• High School Completion ranges from 83% in Burnett Co to 98% in Pepin Co	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % Poverty: 11%• % Poverty ranges from 5% in St Croix Co to 14% in Vernon• % Child Poverty: 15%• % Child Poverty ranges from 5% in St Croix Co to 23% in Rusk• Households Struggling to Make Ends Meet: 39%• Households Struggling to Make Ends Meet ranges from 31% in St Croix Co to 45% in Rusk Co

Early Care and Education (ECE)

Wisconsin Departments of Children and Families (DCF), Health Services (DHS) and Public Instruction (DPI) all support families and young children along the continuum of care from 0-5. Through public, non profit and private partnerships, Wisconsin strives to provide a seamless system of support during this critical period in a child's development. Programs include **home visitation, parent support, early intervention, Head Start, 4K and child care.**

Home Visiting

The WR accounts for 12% of Family Foundations Home Visitation (FFHV) participants. Non-FFHV programs available include First Connections from St. Joseph's Hospital and Building Families from Children's Wisconsin.



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

Parent Support & Service Navigation

Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Family Resource Centers, Wisconsin Well Badger, 2-1-1 and the [Western Regional Center](#) for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs all support families.

Health Programs

Every county in the WR has a [WIC](#) office. County Health Departments offer [Prenatal Care Coordination](#) and/or other healthy pregnancy support.

Early Intervention

Children who qualify have access to public early intervention through Part C ([Birth to 3 Program](#)) and Part B ([Early Childhood Special Education](#)) programs.

Head Start

Early Head Start programs serve children 0-3 and Head Start 3-5 year olds in 17 counties in the WR.

4K

Publicly funded 4-year-old kindergarten is available through schools and community approaches to 4K through child care programs, preschools and/or Head Start.

Child Care

The **Preschool Development Grant** uses [Access](#), [Affordability](#), [Quality](#) and [Workforce](#) through the [Lens of Equity and Inclusion](#) as a framework for evaluating early care and education across the state.

Access



In the WR, there are an estimated 47,000 children and 28,000 child care spots. Half the zip codes in Wisconsin classified as a child care desert are in the Western region. In Jackson County, 48% of parents reported that a family member or friend was caring for their child.



Families receiving Wisconsin Shares child care assistance must enroll children in a YoungStar participating provider. As of February 2020 in the WR, there are 508 YoungStar participating providers, or 78% of providers.

Affordability



The federal government defines affordable child care as 7% of yearly income. This would mean parents should spend \$3,000 in Rusk County-\$5,400 in St Croix County. Actual costs are far different. The average group child care in La Crosse County costs \$11,000 for infant care, double the rate of the highest income county in the region.



In the WR, half as many children 0-5 participated in WI Shares in 2019, compared to 2018.

Quality



Quality is defined as a YoungStar rating of 3-5 Stars. The WR has the lowest percentage of 3-5 Star providers at 46%.

Workforce



Information specific to the WR is currently unavailable. See the statewide report for more information about child care workforce.